

DEPRESSION

Symptoms

1. Sad or flat affect. Little or no eye contact.
2. Lack of interest in previously enjoyed activities. Increased sleep.
3. Deterioration of academic performance. Poor concentration and indecision.
4. Moody irritability. Reduced appetite.
5. Isolation from family or friends

Possible Causes

1. Early deprivation of care and affection
2. Anger turned inward – won't directly express anger
3. Feeling helpless – can't control life so they give up
4. Reaction to loss or crisis
5. Attempt to gain attention

Goals

1. Acknowledge depression verbally and resolve its causes
2. To feel loved and accepted by others
3. Acknowledge the life changes that resulted in sadness
4. Elevate the mood and show evidence of the usual energy and activity level
5. Reduce irritability and increase social interaction with family and friends
6. Show a renewed interest in academic achievement as well as expressions of joy

How to Help

1. Monitor the seriousness of the depression and the potential for self-harm. Refer the student if necessary.
2. Demonstrate genuine interest and positive regard to promote self-esteem
3. Reinforce the student's expression of feelings of hurt, anger or disappointment
4. Assist in identifying the cognitive messages the student gives to her/himself that reinforce feelings of helplessness and hopelessness
5. Use art or play to help the student express their depressive feelings
6. Encourage and reinforce statements of hope for the future
7. Use therapeutic feelings games to assist student to be more verbal about feelings
8. Assist parents in establishing a routine of positive activities for the student
9. Explore with students the pleasurable activities that could be pursued
10. Reinforce pleasurable social interaction with friends
11. Examine favorite classes. Encourage special projects to renew interest in academics.